

Your Child's Lead Test

There is no safe level of lead in the body. A child can be hurt by lead and still look healthy. Lead in the body can hurt the brain, kidneys, and nervous system. The way to find out if your child has been exposed to lead is a blood lead test.

Your child should have a blood lead test at age 1 and again at age 2.

Two Types of Tests

There are two types of blood lead tests, capillary tests from a finger, heel, or toe and venous tests from a vein in the arm. Children are usually tested with a capillary test first.

If your child has a capillary test of 10 or higher, you should have a venous test done as soon as possible to confirm the test result.

No Safe Level of Lead

No amount of lead in the body is safe. The Vermont Department of Health consults with parents to help identify how their child may be exposed to lead when the child's blood lead level is 5 or higher.

The Department of Health takes additional steps when a child's venous blood lead test is 10 or higher.

What happens if a venous test is 10 or higher?

- The Health Department will call you to set up a time to visit your home to help you find lead hazards.
- Your health care provider and the Health Department will work with you to develop a plan to help your child.
- Other children younger than age 6 who live or spend all day in your house should get a blood lead test.
- Together with your health care provider, plan a time in 1 to 6 months to re-test your child

What can you do?

Lead poisoning is a *preventable* health problem. No matter what your child's blood lead level, there are steps you can take to help protect your child. The back of this fact sheet lists some actions you can take.

You can learn more about lead hazards by calling the Health Department at 1-800-439-8550 or by checking the web site at healthvermont.gov.



**DEPARTMENT
OF HEALTH**

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OVER

Prevention

In Vermont, most lead poisoning comes from eating invisible lead dust. Peeling and chipping paint creates this lead dust. The dust clings to fingers and objects that children normally put in their mouths. Lead was banned in house paint in 1978. Houses built before 1978 may have lead paint.

If you are a tenant in a house built before 1978, your landlord must look for chipping and peeling paint and fix it in a safe way. You can also help prevent lead poisoning by maintaining your house in good condition, cleaning in a lead-safe way, and eating healthy foods.

Maintain

- Check for chipping, peeling, cracked, or disturbed paint
- Block children's access to chipping, peeling, cracked, or disturbed paint until it is repaired
- Install window well inserts to provide a smooth cleaning surface
- Use lead-safe work practices such as wet sanding and wet scraping
- Do not use a belt sander or heat gun. Do not dry scrape or dry sand

Clean

- Use only a vacuum with a HEPA filter, and vacuum slowly
- Wet mop floors instead of sweeping
- Use disposable towels to wet clean window sills and other surfaces
- Leave shoes at the door to prevent tracking soil that contains lead into the house
- Wash children's toys often to remove invisible lead dust

Eat Healthy

- Serve children fruits, vegetables, and dairy products as well as iron-rich foods
- Plant vegetable and other food gardens in lead-free soil
- Run water until cold for cooking, drinking, and making formula
- Wash children's hands often, especially before meals and naps
- Serve snacks and meals to children at the table or in their highchairs

Other Sources

Children can get lead poisoning from sources other than lead paint. There may be lead in soil or in water. Many products may contain lead. Examples are keys, glazed pottery, children's jewelry, toys made in other countries, artist's paints, bullets, fishing sinkers, antique furniture, and imported candy (especially from Mexico). Keep children away from products with lead.

- Keep children from playing in bare soil near roadways and along the side of older houses
- Do not let children play with metal keys
- Do not store food in open cans or pottery
- Beware of dangers with sports/hobbies such as reloading shells or making stained glass
- Be aware of products that have been recalled by the Consumer Product Safety Commission

To keep track of lead hazards in many products, check with the Consumer Product Safety Commission regularly for recalled items. You can check at www.cpsc.gov.

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